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Letter dated 28 February 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the conclusions of the European Union General Affairs Council on the Western Balkans, issued on 27 February 2001 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Per **Nostrõm**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations

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Conclusions of the European Union General Affairs Council on the Western Balkans, issued on 27 February 2001

The Council welcomed the Special Representative for Kosovo of the United Nations Secretary-General, Hans Haekkerup, and expressed its full support of his efforts to ensure the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). It underlined its continuing commitment to a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo. The Council strongly condemned the latest attack against a convoy of buses carrying Kosovo Serbs close to Podujevo. This act of terrorism is a serious blow against the interests of the people of Kosovo. It will not be allowed to undermine the efforts of the international community to implement fully Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The Council called on local leaders and communities concerned to increase their efforts to build confidence through constructive dialogue in good faith, and to make progress on issues of common interest. In this context, the Council highly appreciated the central role played by KFOR in assuring security and public order in the province, and its effort to build a safe environment for all the people and communities of Kosovo. The European Union is ready to continue its support, including through UNMIK, to the defusing of tensions through projects supporting all ethnic groups and minorities and promoting economic development and enhanced security. It recalled the urgent need for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbian authorities to proceed with the speedy release of all political prisoners. It urged all those responsible to disclose information regarding missing persons and to create conditions for the safe and dignified return of refugees and displaced persons.

The Council welcomed the proposal of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to develop, as the next step, a legal framework for provisional institutions for self-government, including adequate safeguards for minority rights. The Council expects all ethnic groups in Kosovo to participate constructively in this process. It agreed with the Special Representative that the establishment of the legal framework, and in particular the definition of the functions and the powers of the elected bodies, is essential to ensure successful Kosovo-wide elections in conformity with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). In this context the Council underlined the need to develop the electoral system further, including through an updated and integrated civil and voter registry, including refugees and internally displaced persons, so as to ensure that the elections truly represent the will of the population of Kosovo. The Council also stressed the importance of the participation of all communities in the ballot and of ensuring a high security environment for the voting. It further encouraged the authorities in Belgrade to support the election process and exert positive influence on Kosovo Serb participation in the electoral process.

The Council recalled the substantial support which the European Union continues to provide for the stabilization and development of Kosovo. In support of law and order, European Union member States have provided the largest

contribution to KFOR, as well as providing police and judiciary, and provide the majority of funding for the OSCE efforts in institution-building and civil society. The European Community has been the largest donor of humanitarian assistance, and remains the lead actor in the field of reconstruction and economic development, not only in financial terms but also through its responsibility/leadership for pillar 4 of UNMIK. The Council noted that a donors' meeting for Kosovo was being held at Pristina on 25 and 26 February.

The Council expressed its concern at the level of tension and violence in south-east Serbia and condemned actions by ethnic Albanian armed groups, which threaten to destabilize the region and hamper the free flow of transport and communications, in particular the Pan-European corridor. In this context, it also condemned the rising number of incidents in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and reiterated its strong attachment to the principle of the inviolability of all borders in the region. It called on all involved to isolate extremists, to promote reconciliation and multi-ethnic cooperation and work constructively towards a peaceful solution of the conflict, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It supported the initiative of the Belgrade authorities to find a peaceful and durable solution to the current situation in south-east Serbia. The Council expressed its readiness to continue to extend concrete support to efforts towards peaceful solution of the conflict. It underlined the importance of an increased presence of monitors of the European Union Monitoring Mission in the area as a useful contribution in this respect and expressed the readiness of the European Union to make available an additional substantial number of monitors provided that their security is adequately assured.

The Council welcomed projects already undertaken by the Commission and member States for the development of the area and invited them to consider additional assistance.

The Council welcomed the letter of the Secretary-General/High Representative, and requested him to urgently present a comprehensive set of proposals for further European Union action concerning the Presevo Valley, in close collaboration with the Presidency and the Commission, in order to support the process in the region and to contribute to international efforts in the achievement of a peaceful solution.

On the proposal of the Secretary-General/High Representative, Javier Solana, the Council endorsed Ambassador Antóin Mac Unfraidh as the new head of the European Union Monitoring Mission.